William Shatner's real-life close encounter . . .

William Shatner - who's visited every life when he was lost in the desert.

Shatner - who soars into the cosmos one recalls being led to safety by a stranger, and

then seeing some sort of UFO in the distance.

Shatner, 60, tells of his experience in an interview released by the New York Center for UFO Research.

It began when he and a group of friends motorcycled into the Mojave Desert near Palmdale, Calif., one day in the 1960s.

He was at the rear of the pack when he fell from his cycle and was knocked unconscious.

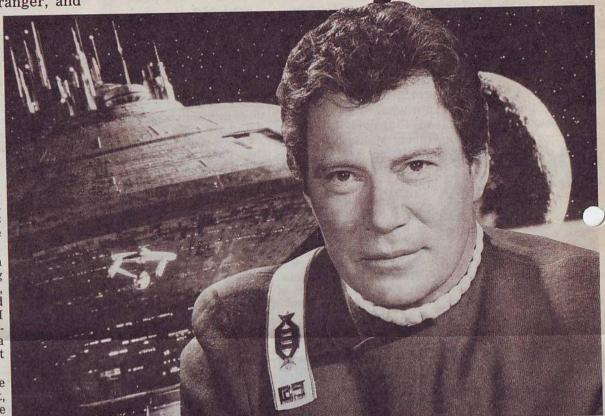
Shatner says his friends hadn't stopped to help him because they didn't realize until they were many miles away that he was no longer with the group.

As he came to, he realized he was in dire trouble. The hot sun was beating down, and his throat was parched. But, suddenly, "I thought I saw and heard something," Shatner says. "After that, I didn't feel as weak and dehydrated anymore. It was more a sensing, a feeling, a shadowy phantom. All I know is that I felt better."

Shatner lifted the heavy motorcycle off its side, but the engine wouldn't start, so he began slowly pushing it along. He quickly grew tired again, and then, in the distance.

me on," says Shatner. "So I paved road."

William Shatner — who's visited every corner of the galaxy in his 25 years as "Star Trek's" Captain Kirk — has revealed how a close encounter with a UFO once saved his life when he was lost in the desert. more time in the new movie, "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" — says the amazing encounter took place after he fell off his motorcycle in California's blistering Mojave Desert. He



squinting into the sun, he saw something BEAM HIM UP! If not for a mysterious being, Shatner may never have starred on "Star Trek."

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zation in the form of a gas to dying from the heat. To this day, he still wonders entire 'Star Trek' phenome-"I thought I saw some- station in the middle of the But his amazing experi- who — or what — gave him non as we know it may never body, another cyclist, waving desert, at the side of an old, ences with extraterrestrial vi- the strength to escape death have existed had it not been s station provided was then off in the distance. Says the UFO Research UFO. Shatner almost cer-

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me on," says Shatner. "So I paved road." the heavy metal monster cool relief for Shatner, who that I saw an object glistening Center's director, Michael tainly would have died until I stumbled upon civili- realized how close he'd come in the heavens," he recalls. Luckman: "Ironically, the that desert heat."



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The man who composed 'Taps' couldn't play a note

"Taps," the inspiring bugle call Haunting tune
of America's Armed Forces, was created by a Civil War general with no musical training whatsoever — was whistled who composed it by whistling the by a wounded haunting notes to his bugler.

Union Gen. Daniel Butterfield came up with the plaintive tune a week after Union general

the June 1862 Battle of Gaines Mill near Richmond, Va., where jous musical phrases over in his he won the Medal of Honor for mind, searching for just the right bravery under fire.

Though seriously wounded in the boost the morale of his men. battle, Gen. Butterfield's concern a tune to comfort them.

combination of notes that would

Next morning he summoned his was for his exhausted and bloodied brigade bugler, Oliver Norton, and soldiers - and he felt they needed whistled to Norton the simple yet touching tune he'd settled on.

until he was satisfied with the call.

Norton wrote down the notes on told his bugler to "just sound taps." the back of an old envelope and played taps for the troops that evening.

still summer night," the bugler later recalled, "and was heard beyear-old general began turning var- youd the limits of the Butterfield the Army in 1874. Brigade as it echoed through the valleys.

"The next morning, buglers from ices ever since. other brigades came to inquire about the new taps and to learn how to sound it."

playing taps at military funerals beling tune he had given his country. On the night of July 1 the 30- The bugler blew the 24-note mel- gan. An Army captain, fearing the

ody several times as the general traditional firing of rifle volleys hummed and whistled changes over a soldier's grave might trigger shooting from Confederate lines,

The call quickly spread throughout the Army - and was even picked up by the Confederates, who "The music was beautiful on that played it at the funeral of Gen. Stonewall Jackson in 1863.

Taps was officially adopted by

It's been used for lights-out, military funerals and memorial serv-

Gen. Butterfield died in 1901 and was buried at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point - to the Only days later the tradition of sounds of the mournful yet thrill-

- LARRY MASIDLOVER 43